The Unitarian Christian

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EDITORIAL

It may be a perfect April day; it may be a blustering north-easter. Whatever the weather, Easter will come, bringing something the best weather cannot enhance, nor the worst impair. From his pulpit the minister will look down upon the largest congregation he will see during the whole year, and will ask: Why do they come? Curiosity? Some, perhaps. Force of habit? Very few. To hear the music? Fewer still. The thing to do? About twenty-five per cent. Most of them are here for a valid reason.

It is a true assumption, for Easter, as independent of the minister as of the weather, will speak its message without his help. All it asks of him is the good taste of true humility. For Easter is a Border-line Day. It leads us out of it all, out of ourselves, out of the guardian gates of saving flesh and bone, out of the tumult of life's angry voices, to stand on the very border-line of human thought, with the world's Vanity Fair all behind us, and before us the vast ocean of the Unknown. If we listen we may hear its message.

We talk bravely of perfecting our lives in this world; reaching the crown of manhood in these earthly terms. Yet whichever way we turn we discover that this manhood, this soul, cannot be fully explored and fully developed in these earthly terms. It needs tasks more difficult, and exactions more demanding than any this world contains. It is like the mountaineer among our gentle New England hills who seeks in vain an Everest worthy of his mettle. Or like Gulliver in Liliput who can find no chair big enough to sit in, or bed long enough to lie in, or chamber high enough to stand in. Or like Tennyson, who climbs to the snows of age, only to stand on the height of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher. We discover that the soul in us is too big for its earthly environment, since it contains capacities which no earthly exigency can uncover, and latent powers which no earthly discipline can cultivate. Then we turn to Easter with grateful willingness to listen and understand. This life is not the end. We are not victims of a mirthless jest. Other lives await us, where mountains are higher, and valleys fairer and sweeter, and opportunities richer and of finer grain, where our souls can expand their hidden stores, and take another step toward our goal: the fulness of manhood. C. E. P.

With two exceptions no one denies that there was a human phase in the life of Jesus. The Docetics claim that his human existence was not really human, only a seeming. He seemed to suffer his agony and crucifixion, but there was no real suffering. The followers of Arthur Drews and his school claim that no such man ever existed; Jesus is a myth.

As Unitarians our concern is to keep in true perspective the human phase in the life of Jesus, his teachings, his example, and his personal religion. He had a religion, a thought of God, a moral incentive, and a manner of worship. This religion of his is what we mean by the word "Christianity." Our purpose is to preserve and strengthen this Christian essence of Unitarianism.

The Fatherhood of God.

The Brotherhood of Man.

The Leadership of Jesus.

Salvation by Character.

The Progress of Mankind,

onward and upward Forever.

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THESE THINGS HAVE BEEN RIGHT

by Lawrence Marvin Jaffa

Job wrestled with the question: Why did God let this happen? and finally came out accepting God's will. In our own spiritual struggles most of us get to the point of resigned acceptance, but the high hurdle is to go on to an understanding that "These Things have been Right." We are incomplete until we validate in our own experience the question God asks Job: "Who hath given understanding to the heart?" and acquiesce with Job in his answer: "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ears, but now mine eye seeth thee."

The sense that these things have been right burst triumphantly through the verse of Browning, when David proclaims: "I believe it." The same sense that these things have been right must be ours if we are to make the most of our lives.

Whoever presumes to say what others must do in their lives, must be prepared to practice his preaching and be candid about his own life. We have all had experiences of wrong. Either we still smart from a sense of having been wronged by events, or we have to admit that we were wrong. As long as we live with either of these feelings we are incomplete, and we cut and curb the power of our religious faith. So let's do something about it.

This faith of Job and Browning is our faith too, and it has been right. But if it has been a "Fair Weather Faith" it is not enough. Many of us stop believing when a personal bereavement, or the aggregate loss in war, makes us think things have gone wrong. On the other hand "Crisis-Conversions" very often mean only that our particular life-raft stayed afloat, and our own idea of what God should do for us has been realized. It is good to return from time to time to points where we have previously stood, either geographically or philosophically, and see if we have progressed, or if things look the same to us. Anyone of us can go back in life and show where things have been right that we did not realize at the time. At the time we argued: "Why does God let these things happen? If he can't stop them, is he powerful enough to believe in? If he can and doesn't, is he good enough to believe in?" It is good to come back and stand where we have stood before and see if we have gone far enough. It is wrong to think it is enough that Job admitted God was all-powerful, and that the reason for his goodness is beyond our understanding; but if we believe without question in the sunshine and prosperity, it is inconsistent to doubt because of clouds and adversity. Job did not fold his hands and bow down, with "such knowledge is too wonderful for me." He said: "These things have been right. Now mine eye seeth thee."

There is something that should be particularly appealing to us Liberals in this. Job had to see to believe. The thing which pseudo-liberals are apt to overlook is that he did see and understand. We have to win through to the acknowledgment that even systems which require rebuilding as well as worlds all planted and beautiful, even tears and death as well as harvests and life are all things that have been right in the total cosmic pattern. We walk into an art gallery and examine a masterpeice through a magnifying glass: a chaos of tiny strokes; shades of color placed in the wrong juxtaposition; the end of a hair from the careless artist's brush. Is this what we came to see? But walk across the gallery and look back at what we have been examining: the individual strokes disappear; the work is seen complete. Walk through our rainy city and there is much to criticize. Fly over it and see the pattern of streets, the encircling curve of the bay, the silver lines of the bridge—it is a different view. Perspective is essential to judgment. We have to live twenty-five years beyond the present, get well through the Second World War, back away from a picture, fly over a city before we see enough of these things to see that they have been right.

What about our religious heritage? It has been right. Fatherhood of God; Brotherhood of man; Leadership of Jesus; Salvation by character; Progress of mankind onward and upward forever, has been and is right. It is an optimistic faith. One does not have to go far to realize how much the world needs optimism. How good it is to affirm together: "All things work together for good to them that love God." How right it is to be reminded with Job of the intricate beauty and perfection of Creation. It is right to go on caring for each other, and helping each other. Service in any terms but those

of brotherhood, of individual meeting individual, hand touching hand, silent smile greeting hopeful eye, would lack the vitalizing spirit. Mechanical distribution of aid, no matter how magnanimous, misses the mark.

It is right that we avow our faith in the Leadership of Jesus. It means this to me: I used to like to study beneath Velasquez's painting of the Crucifixion. One of my friends didn't. She said: "It reminds me that we always kill our best people." I said: "It reminds me that our best people cannot be killed." Like most of our Fellowship, I have never accepted the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement. But let us back away from the picture. Here is a two-way relationship. Because we feel moral compunction against letting anyone atone for us, we have not seen that perhaps it is we who must have the vicarious experience. If we can be led by the contemplation of Jesus' agony, and inspired by his forgiveness, perhaps we can also see that these things have been right. We can look upon ruined cities as the rubble of *our* homes. We will find in every suffering one of the least of these our brothers the challenge to make better the world in which we live. In so far as this touches us we are saved by the experience of Jesus. That experience communicates its essence of confident loving to us. This is the revelation of Browning: in our desire to serve we are gloriously confronted with Jesus as incarnate love.

We believe in Salvation by Character. We could be no more right. The forces which most threaten the world today are the men who say we cannot influence our fate. The false prophets of determinism, be they Darwinian, Freudian, or Maxian, must know they have a formidable foe in the consecrated Liberal who dares say: "I am the captain of my soul." Pause for a moment and consider: Authoritarian religions are manipulating the souls of men; totalitarian states are decreeing the fates of men from cradle to grave with caste systems as rigid as any of ancient cultures. Isn't our denomination in line to profit from a good vigorous reminder that individual integrity, greatness of spirit, holiness of life are precisely the antidotes needed to counteract the diabolical plots which modern villainy is hatching? Plots to make man feel small; guilty; kill his aspiration and integrity; kill his capacity to recognize greatness or achieve it; allow nothing sacred to remain in man's soul; teach him ridicule; kill his reverence. These efforts are being boastfully made.

Most difficult to affirm is our faith in the progress of Mankind onward and upward forever. Here is our great challenge, the most desperately needed part of our Gospel. When we promulgated it we were unique. If we dare advance it in the face of Neo-orthodoxy we will be again unique. We are right, though. Human Nature is good. We have set higher and higher goals for more and more of humanity, and we are meeting them. More of the world lives longer and better. More of the world is literate. More of the world takes up arms more reluctantlly. Progress is constant. "What is excellent, as God lives, is permanent." From the perspective of centuries we can say the events of our history have been right. Perhaps one reason we feel so often wrong is that for the first time in history we have expected so much. We have tried to know because we have believed so greatly that we can know.

We have learned so much "WHAT," and answered so little "WHY" that we underestimate both our goodness and our progress. The progress of the next decades will properly be in imaginative understanding of the things we now know. Integration of the vast accretion of detailed special knowledge and the restoration of perspective and purpose are tasks recruiting the pioneers of tomorrow. If our faith means anything let us answer the call. The drop of faith we need most is in ourselves, and in the ultimate worth and rightness of the events through which we pass.

Our belief in the Fatherhood of God is right belief; in the perfection of his Creation is right. It is right to believe in the Brotherhood of Man, for thus we realize both purpose and responsibility in life. We are right to believe in the Leadership of Jesus, for as we vicariously experience his suffering we dedicate ourselves to alleviating all suffering. Our faith in Salvation by Character is right in leading us to affirm the individual hero in the face of Mass Movements that might grind out the soul of Man. We believe, and we are right to believe, in the Progress of Mankind onward and upward forever; and the ultimate triumph of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, as humanity champions them against currently encroaching materialistic values.

Suffering identical trials together is not the only force that transforms an anomalous class into a brotherhood. Society can produce consecrated guardians without wars. Yet insofar as suffering inherent in these experiences opens the heart to understanding, they have been right. We are saved, or fulfilled, only when our eyes are opened to the meaning of Christ's suffering. We believe that by this understanding we can lessen suffering, and answer at last: "No!" to George Bernard Shaw's query: "Must then a Christ perish in every generation to save those who have no imagination?"

IN A ROSE GARDEN

The Story of Creation As Science Is Writing It

by Marion Franklin Ham

Sitting at ease beneath the trees
  That grew beside the garden wall,
I mused and dreamed and watched the bees
  And listened to the redbird's call.

But while I mused a silence fell
  On humming bee and singing bird;
As though some power had wrought a spell
  To still the music I had heard.

A rose that bloomed beside the wall
  Spoke languidly, with scented breath:
"My petals have begun to fall—
  I feel the blighting touch of death."

The rose is queen of flowers, I said,
  And yet Death rules this garden spot;
He spares no queen, no royal head;
  They all must share the common lot.

* * *

Death's rule is everywhere supreme;
  The stars are subject to his sway;
Eternal as the worlds may seem,
  They slowly die and pass away.

This solid earth that nurtures man
  And brings his transient life to bloom,
Marked for this fate since time began,
  Is moving to its certain doom.

And man himself, the finest fruit
  That time has brought this earth to bear;
As yet half god, half untamed brute;
  In Nature's realm how does he fare?

Strong in the strength which he has won
  By wrestling with adversity,
He now is harnessing the sun
  And mastering earth and air and sea.

* * *

But what avails his growing might?
  This one fixed law he must obey:
While yet he strives, the falling night
  Brings to a close his little day.

On yonder dial the shadow cast
  Records the minutes as they run;
But while we watch, the day is past
  And darkness veils the setting sun.

So slips man's fleeting life away;
  Before his work is well begun
Death's shadow falls across his way
  And darkness veils his setting sun.

* * *

Ah, there's the thought that gives us pause:
  What happens when man's body dies?
What wise man, versed in Nature's laws,
  Can prove that life from death will rise?

When roses die they cease to be.
  What reason have we to suppose
That man escapes the destiny
  Which Nature chooses for the rose?

When that small pump within the breast
  That holds us from the waiting night
Is still, at last, in final rest,
  Where then does conscious life take flight?

Hope as we may, the dead are dead;
  Their quiet sleep is long and deep;
Who knows if in that narrow bed
  Their slumber is not endless sleep?

* * *

Then, as I mused, a small voice spoke
  In some deep recess of my mind:
"The God whose blessing you invoke
  Can give you what you seek to find.

"Reject its counsel if you must,
  But listen to the Spirit speak;
You still have hope; renew your trust
  And you will find the truth you seek.

"Dismiss the doubt that clouds your thought;
  Unveil your eyes, that you may see
The perfect wisdom which has wrought
  Creation as it has to be.

"Death seems to man an *evil* power,
Endowed with universal sway;
Forever seeking to devour
All life that it can find to slay.

"However gruesome death may seem,
As pictured in the finite mind,
Its dreaded power is not supreme;
Its metes and bounds are well defined.

"Creation's Lord of life controls
The life and destiny of men;
Living in him, immortal souls
Defy death's power and live again.

* * *

"Death is beginning, not an end;
Man has eternal life at birth;
All future heavens and hells depend
On how he lives his life on earth.

"Death is man's friend, not his arch-foe;
It opens for his soul the door
To life that he could never know
Without this friend to go before.

"Lacking death's check on life, the earth
Could not be made a home for man;
Death, balancing continuous birth,
Is part of God's creative plan.

* * *

"Man's soul, when it matures, will be
God's masterpiece, a work sublime;
Destined to live eternally,
Beyond the bounds of space and time.

"Creation of this human soul
Was God's objective when he made
The worlds that in their orbits roll,
In robes of dazzling light arrayed.

"The flaming suns and stars in space,
Insensate matter, gas and fire,
Served well his purpose in their place;
But his creative *aim* was higher.

* * *

"When the primeval ages passed
And the mammalian age began,
The cooling, changing earth at last
Had formed a habitat for man.

"The time had come in this vast plan
To set creation's highest goal;
'Now,' God said, 'I will make man,
And give him an immortal soul.

" 'In his brute body I will place
A living spiritual embryo;
A nascent soul, endowed with grace
And power and will to live and grow.

" 'And thus, evolving in the brute,
As the long ages come and go,
Man's soul, still primitive and mute,
Shall gain the power to think and know.

" 'With widening knowledge, gained in time,
This conscious spirit shall acquire
The power to guide its upward climb,
And then to higher goals aspire.

" 'Until at last, freed from the beast,
With thought attuned to the divine,
From all its brutal lusts released,
Its nature shall be one with mine.

" 'The human soul that wins this goal
Shall be a living part of me;
Life of my life and soul of my soul,
As *one*—through all eternity.'

* * *

"Out of primeval seas and slime
Man's soul has climbed its upward way,
Through aeons of prehistoric time
To its attainments of today.

"But this is not the journey's end;
The road leads to that higher goal;
Evolving man must now depend
Upon himself to save his soul.

"Still ever upward he must climb
To reach that distant shining height;
Until at last, in God's good time,
His soul shall know and *do* the right.

* * *

"How marvelous the human frame,
Man's upright body when he stands;
His eyes alight with living flame;
The perfect structure of his hands!

"But far more wonderful his soul,
With winged ethereal sandals shod,
That lifts him toward this higher goal
And links his human life with God.

* * *

"Man, master of earth and sea and air,
Craving more power, now seeks control
Of Nature's laws, but takes no care
To use his power to feed his soul.

"Too long he spends his brawn and brain
To win a low material goal;
Forgetting that all power is vain
That does not feed his growing soul.

* * *

"The time has come when man must check
The trend of his destructive thought,
Before he brings his earth to wreck
And all his striving comes to naught.

"To meet this crisis, he must see
  The danger in his lust for power,
Which can destroy his liberty
  Before it comes to its full flower.

"This menace needs strong men to stand
  Against the brute desire to kill;
And God calls souls in every land
  To hear his voice and do his will.

"Man now must seek the Spirit's light
  To guide him on his upward road.
Not what he *wants*, but what is *right*
  Must constitute his moral code.

* * *

"The jungle law has had its day;
  Now it must pass and cease to be;
And man must choose the upward way
  That leads to his maturity.

"Brute strife and passion must give place
  To love and human brotherhood;
A bond that binds the human race
  To work together for the good.

* * *

"But now blind leaders of the blind
  Are leading multitudes astray;
Seeking a good they canot find,
  They grope, and fall, and miss the way.

"Alas! that evil-minded men,
  With selfish aims, seek to control
And rule this fruitful earth — as when
  The brute man ruled his helpless soul.

"Their bestial lust for power is vain;
  Their plans for world conquest shall fail;
No stratagem of scheming brain
  Can make their brutal force prevail.

"God in his wisdom has decreed
  Eternal triumph for the right;
Wrong, like the fruitage of bad seed,
  Succumbs at last to its own blight.

* * *

"O musing soul, immersed in dreams,
  The time for action is at hand;
A new star in the darkness gleams;
  Awake, rise up and take your stand!

"Trust God, and take a firmer hold
  On what your conscience knows is right;
Follow the prophet souls of old,
  Who walked by faith and not by sight.

"All freemen now must rise and stand
  As one great world-wide brotherhood,
Enlisted under God's command
  To seek and serve the common good.

"Behold the saints of history,
  Whose lives were as a shining light,
Foretelling things that are to be
  When man has learned to do the right.

"They faced the brute in man that tried
  To kill their souls, and bravely stood
To fend its wrath — but failed, and died;
  And, dying, lived to serve the good.

"Let their lives be for you the sign
  And symbol of man's upward way,
And strive to make your own life shine
  A beacon light for souls today.

"Live in the fullness of your power,
  While Nature grants you power to live;
Fill to the brim your little hour
  With all the good that life can give.

"The beast that wages deadly strife
  Lives, but knows not how, nor why;
O soul of man, make your earth-life,
  However brief, sublime and high.

"The trivial thought, the base desire,
  The deed that shames your high estate;
Drag not your birthright in the mire;
  You have the power to shape your fate.

"Go forth from this rose-bower retreat
  To men who need what you can give;
Help them to overcome defeat,
  And show them what it means to live."

* * *

The voice had ceased to speak—and I,
  Awaking from my reverie,
Gazed up into the cloudless sky
  With quickened eyes that now could see.

In every fragile, nodding flower
  And every sunlit slope of sod,
That so beguiled my idle hour,
  I saw the gentle smile of God.

I felt his presence in my heart,
  And heard the voice that spoke again:
"Build on your dreams; and do your part
  To lift and lead your fellowmen."

* * *

I said to God, I will arise
And join the souls who choose the right;
Let me be feet and hands and eyes
  For men who seek to climb the height.

Send me, O God, where there is need
  To face the problems of today;
Whate'er their color, race or creed,
  Let me lead men the upward way.

PRAYER

Lord, we implore thy help to prepare ourselves for the Day we love, but can hardly understand; bearing a promise we crave, but hardly dare to accept. Forgive us the pride of intellect that leads us into pitfalls of vanity and boastfulness; and that presumes to know thee, and thy truth, and thy ways, and thy holy purposes.

Teach us the saving grace of humility, to warn us that we may be mistaken; to increase our willingness to be taught, to be helped, to be guided and enlightened; and to make possible unto us a self-confidence that shall come unto us in slow and cautious increase, always founded upon prayer, always sanctioned by conscience, and if it be thy will, always supported and enriched by the intimations and flashes of insight which thou dost communicate in thine own ways, to the souls that tarry thy leisure in purity and faith.

Lord, teach us reverence; the instant recognition of that which surpasses our truth, and excels our goodness, and out-shines the beauty we boast. Cleanse our hearts of all their furtive jealousies and resentments, and make us generous in our praise of the generosity in other hearts; swift in our perception of the countless daily nobilities in the world about us; and grateful in our recognition of the hunger and thirst after righteousness that runs like a golden thread throughout the fabric of our human living. Most of all, Dear Lord, the glories of thy righteousness, the wonders of thy love—let them shine before our eyes and deepen our worship, and command our ceaseless adoration.

So grant us to welcome our Easter Morning and, in the trustful teachable simplicity of little children, to listen as it tells us of the good things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but which thou hast prepared for them that love Thee. We ask it remembering him whom death could not overcome. Amen.

WE CAN USE EASTER

Dr. Johnson did not have a very high opinion of human nature which, considering his times, is not strange. About all that could be expected of the ordinary mortal was that he should be inoffensive, innocent. "A man is never so harmlessly employed as when he is trying to make money." What Dr. Johnson had in mind was the corrective power of an absorbing ambition. The moment a man gives his allegiance to such an ambition, and for many men the acquisition of wealth is just such an ambition, his mind straightens out, his energies become ordered and definitely enlisted. Aimlessness vanishes and takes with it the dirty little temptations and vagrant impulses that Isaac Watts calls "the mischief that Satan still finds for idle hands to do." The man thus absorbed by his ambition becomes less of a moral hazard to his society.

Will not the historian tell us that the most morally peaceful and orderly periods in history are those when some definite goal or project laid its tyrannical requisitions on all thoughts and hopes, all motives and ambitions? Probably he will not; for the statistics to support such an assertion are not available. We shall have to venture the statement at our own risk. Peter the Hermit awakens an enthusiasiasm for the First Crusade that sweeps all hearts. Does it not incidentally sweep out a vast amount of paltry filth and leave those hearts a little cleaner? Our own ancestors of the seventeenth century were completely captivated by the opportunities which this New England wilderness held out to them. They could own land in permanent fee simple, and actually pass it on to their children without entail. They could work, not for an over-lord but for themselves, and enjoy personally the entire fruits of their labors. They could give free rein to their individual tastes and preferences, and rise just as high in the social scale as their own prowess could take them, without once bumping their heads against any factitious ceiling of class restrictions. Did not all this have an effect upon their inner conversation? Were they not literally too busy to waste their time in trivial temptations and "unclean dalliances"? It seems reasonable to think so. Give a man some great, definite, absorbing goal to press on to, and he will press, never fear, in a clean, straightforward, harmless fashion. No one can deny that Easter has served this purpose for millions of people through the centuries. It

has preserved the words of Christ and Paul: "I go to prepare a place for you. Because I live ye shall live also." "Now is Christ risen from the dead; and in Christ shall all be made alive." Building on these words it has set before us its hope of life continued, a great universal objective within the reach of the humblest; a prize which requires for its winning neither strength, skill, nor wisdom, but a pure heart and a simple trust such as the merest child can give. How many millions of the meek, the unlearned, the victimized, the down-trodden have been sustained throughout their lives of misery by this hope of a heaven which even the widow with her two mites can win!

On the other hand, in what a sorry predicament do we find those who dismiss Easter and all its trailing clouds of glory as so much childish nonsense; and propose to justify earthly life by earthly achievements, claiming that it is nothing more than an earthly equation and must be balanced in earthly terms, or not at all. Their professed goal is an earthly paradise where human nature shall be at its best; and human society so ordered as to make that individual best also the easiest and most spontaneous. This earthly paradise ideal breaks down into a sequence of intermediate goals of briefer range, some of them of a single day's range. Many a bewildered soul has whispered to himself: I do not ask to see the distant goal; one step enough for me. For I know that so long as I make good with my one-day, one-step-at-a-time goals, I am thereby making headway toward the distant goal.

That is all very touching, very true, very beautiful. But the trouble is that when this earth-limited soul comes to his earthly limits, and finds that he has run out of intermediate goals both big and little, and that there is still no earthly paradise to justify his patient fidelity, he is face to face with a rather bitter disillusionment. Has he wasted his time? Has he been chasing a Will-o-the-Wisp? Has his trusted and worshipful Human Nature broken faith with him? In France they call this disillusionment "Existentialism," and are taking it rather hard. It is curious and also helpful to see how even so ancient a document as "The Song of the Way," by the Old Philosopher of China seems to foresee this disillusionment and to prefigure the comforting reassurance of our Easter promise:

> "Thirty spokes meet in one hub;
> And because of the part where
> nothing exists we have the
> use of a carriage wheel."

You very properly say that you are an end in yourself; and that your manifest task is to perfect that end in yourself in these present earthly terms, the only terms you know. This you have done, only to find that your end in yourself culminates in a part where nothing exists, an emptiness, a nothingness. Naturally you feel betrayed and frustrated. But be comforted; I am here to tell you that the very nothingness which you have discovered at the core of your life is that which makes you an indispensable part in an end greater than yourself. Never stop with yourself as a perfected end in yourself; for that will mean frustration, nothingness, vanity, a striving after wind. Open your eyes; see for yourself what rainbows teach and sunsets show, verdict which accumulates through lengthening scroll of human fates, that there is an over-all, invincible End, greater than the sum total of all earth's ends in themselves, including them all, needing them all, using them all, and carrying them all along to that one far-off divine Event to which the whole creation moves. So live that you as a perfected end in yourself may be found serviceable to that greater end. It is your only escape from frustration and the futility of nothingness. Only in it can you find meaning beauty, and victory for your life.

Contributed

THE WORKING MINISTER

by Rev. Ford Lewis

I wonder if we clergymen might not all be better off having some useful task to perform with our hands between sermons. I wonder if some direct benefits might not also flow to those whom we serve in the parishes.

Parsons who might insist on precedent for this could find it in great measure. John Bunyan made his living as a tinker; George Fox was a shoemaker and a shepherd; and Brother Lawrence, although finding "no small pain in this exercise," found it possible to praise God among the kitchen pots with great freshness and vigor.

Kabir, the fifteenth-century founder of the Sikh religion, thought that all religious leaders ought to be self-supporting. Himself a weaver by trade, he was also a first rank poet and prophet. Our Western trend toward specialization, bringing forth in the field of religion a body of paid professional preachers, is a fairly recent development. During the Middle Ages there were sometimes almost as many regular clergy tilling the fields surrounding the monasteries as there were secular clergy serving in the parishes.

On the other hand, I wonder how many laymen know from firsthand knowledge—an experience that is occasionally vouchsafed to ministers—the deep running satisfaction that comes from exploring new reaches of the mind. What I am really urging is not so much that all ministers should take odd jobs—though there is a certain honest appeal in such sermon titles as "Thoughts While Pulling Weeds," or "Insights From a Manhole"—as that *all men can think creatively,* no matter what their calling. If the modern minister cannot follow any of the many interesting lines of work represented among his laymen, they at least *can* pioneer along with him in the realm of the mind and spirit, and do it in their spare time..

People sometimes ask me how a minister ever manages just to prepare a sermon every week, not to mention keeping up his correspondence, making calls, counselling, doing necessary professional reading, participating in community and denominational life, preparing radio talks, and so on. Perhaps the person asking the question is himself earning a living, bringing up a family and taking an active part in half a dozen civic enterprises, and might just as well have a similar question asked of him. The answer lies in qualitative living.

Telephone engineers have developed a long distance line called the coaxial cable, which furnishes an interesting analogy to the lives of busy people. It consists of a hollow tube, down the center of which runs a single wire. The wire is supported and insulated by a series of plastic discs spaced at regular intervals along the length of the tube. By using different frequencies, several hundred conversations may be carried on simultaneously over the same wire.

My grandfather led a coaxial life. He made his living chiefly as a successful farmer. On other frequencies he found time for periods of doctoring, soldiering (during the Civil War) and teaching. He was a partner in a drug store, a printing shop proprietor and a good amateur violinist. In his spare time he followed, until the age of eighty, an active career in the ministry. I am afraid he would not have understood my frequent failure, in an eight-hour day, to finish the few chores that fall to me.

It is not inactivity that defeats us but, as Horace writes of his own time, "a busy idleness that is our bane." We need to cultivate a quality of living that transcends a mere spate of years; to count the hours not as hours, but as opportunities; to fill all the little spaces of the moments with meaning.

NOT A RHETORICAL QUESTION

To flock together, birds must discover some similarity of feather to supply the basis for their union. The same is true of people. But must this similarity be one of specific deeds or occupations or even opinions? Just because two men are Republicans and glass-blowers does it follow that they are likely to be the warmest of friends? Is it not just as likely that they will be bitter rivals and enemies? The essence of fellowship must be sought not so much in what we do as in what we are. So long as a man is at heart truly reverent and benevolent, loyal, honorable, and spiritually sensitive, may we not feel confidence that his particular reactions to life will be wholly satisfactory; and that we may safely leave it to him to choose the proper recipient for his reverence, or goodwill; and the suitable ways to express his loyalty and integrity; and the most congenial manner of exercising his spiritual sensitiveness? Can we ask more? Have we the right to insist that he shall call his predicates by the same names we use for ours?

In other words, instead of saying that we believe in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, the Leadership of Jesus, Salvation by Character, and the Progress of Mankind onward and upward forever, we would be fairer to all concerned if we left it to each one to supply his own predicates, and found our adequate bond of fellowship in an agreement to believe

In Reverence and Benevolence;
In Loyalty and Integrity;
In the soul, and its final victory.

Perhaps the matter is worthy of a little quiet thought.

Ed.

REV. MARION FRANKLIN HAM, author of the poem "In A Rose Garden," which appears in this issue of THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN, is one of our most honored and best loved retired ministers. We surmise that it has beeen a minor hardship in his life that most people think he is a woman; the same kind of hardship that a woman, save such women as George Eliot or George Sand, might feel if most people thought she was a man. He is just as masculine as the well-known "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, leader of a band of guerilla cavalry during the Revolutionary War. At present he is living in Waverly, in what John Bunyan calls his "Land of Beulah," the last earthly habitation of the faithful pilgrim, where the sun shines night and day, and where nothing offensive is ever seen, heard, or felt. English Unitarians consider him our foremost American hymn-writer. Some years ago he was threatened with blindness; and "in a sad sincerity" he wrote his best known hymn, herewith appended, which clearly indicates his courage and trust and spontaneous mysticism.

Touch thou mine eyes — the sombre shadows falling
  Shut from my sight the kindly light of day.
Out of the depths my soul to thee is calling,
  Touch thou mine eyes, I cannot see the way.

Dark is the path through desert places leading,
  Alone I tread the wastes of doubt and fear;
Fainting, I fall, with bruis-ed feet and bleeding,
  O touch mine eyes, that I may know thee near.

Fain would I see, as in the olden story,
  Thy shining hosts encamped on every side;
Angels of light, armed with thy power and glory,
  To guard my steps whatever may betide.

Life of the life that hour by hour is dying,
  In death I live by thy sustaining grace.
Father, who hearest all thy children's crying,
  Touch thou mine eyes, that I may see thy face.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship will be held on April 11, in the Edward Everett Hale Chapel, 64 Marlborough Street, Boston. The Nominating Committee will offer the following slate for election:

Honorary President: Robert H. Loomis.

President: Rev. Amos B. Horlacher, Dean Dickinson College, Carlisle, Penna.

First Vice President: Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman, Greenfield, Mass.

Second Vice President: Mrs. Herbert Lyman, Brookline, Mass.

Corresponding Secretary: Ralph Lazzaro, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

Secretary: Miss Katherine V. Parker, Boston.

Treasurer: Constant Wendell, Boston.

Directors for three years, 1955-1958—Prof. Kenneth O. Myrick, Tufts College, and Thomas F. Patterson, Cleveland, Ohio.

The Nominating Committee:

DAVID B. LOOMIS,
MRS. N. PHILLIPS DODGE,
REV. HENRY H. SAUNDERSON, D. D.

Unitarian Christian Fellowship

To Members and Friends, Greetings!

An increasing number of people are joining the Unitarian Christian Fellowship because they find in this organization and its quarterly publication, THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN, a medium for preserving and strengthening the Christian essence of Unitarianism — an uncompromising belief in the reality of God and a hearty acceptance of the spiritual leadership of Jesus as our way of life.

In this period of religious bewilderment we feel urged to offer our religious convictions to the thought of our day; convictions based upon the words and spirit of one whose timeliness makes him, in spite of the intervening nineteen centuries, the most modern of modern men, and the paramount influence for bringing spiritual and moral order to our troubled world.

We invite you to join us in this modest service to our times which may prove to be a means by which Christianity, as we know it, will be preserved and handed down to the future generations. By signing and returning the enclosed blank with $2.00 you will become a subscriber to THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN and a member of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship for the current season.

We believe you will find THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN most interesting and helpful. Its aim is to be:

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- *An effort to seek the truth by preserving "all the good the past hath had," especially the words and personality of Jesus of Nazareth, and by reverently comparing notes with one another.*
- *In short, an intimate conversation in print.*

We extend a hearty welcome to all subscribers, old and new, large and small. However, in order that we may do full justice to the work in hand, we make an earnest appeal for the larger contributions.

Sincerely yours,

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